

Doty

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY

12 Oxford Street
Cambridge 38, Massachusetts, U.S.A.
March 1, 1957

Professor Joshua Lederberg
Department of Genetics
University of Wisconsin
Madison 6, Wisconsin

Dear Joshua:

I still remember telling you that I would send along details of the use of sodium lauryl sulfate in lysis of bacteria. Belatedly, and for what it is worth, here it is. If equal volumes of 30% SLS and E. Coli suspended in 0.01 M Versene are mixed and allowed to stand overnight, lysis is complete and the DNA is readily precipitated with ethanol and washed free of SLS with 80% ethanol. Pneumococci lyse in the same way but faster, that is in about ten minutes. Sodium xylene sulfonate (Naxionate) behaves somewhat similarly but we have not used it extensively.

You probably recall my bumbling remarks on the genetics situation here during my visit with you in December. Although I had no background in the problem when I discussed it with you, it quickly became apparent that it would take more than the best possible filling of an associate professorship to bring about a renaissance in genetics at Harvard. As Paul's case was discussed this view became more widely adopted and has recently become unanimous. Paul's promotion has been recommended and now, as you have heard from Kenneth Thimann, the stage has been set for trying to attract you here.

You may also recall my rather inadequate refutation of your belief that Harvard (and MIT) think they can get anyone they want. The ultimate proof of my point is the feeling of uncertainty following close upon the elation that the decision to invite you here had produced. So you, yourself, have disproved one of the fears you may have had about this place.

On the positive side I think you will appreciate that the unanimous decision to invite you here indicates that there is even in these old organisms of the East some latent powers of adaptation. Of course, it may be too little and too late, but you must at least approve of the direction!

More seriously, I do want to say how very much you are wanted here. This goes without saying for Jim and Paul and myself. But it extends much further than you probably think. And there will be others whom you will enjoy having as colleagues. At the moment it looks very much as though Alex Rich may be the next addition.

Professor Joshua Lederberg

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You had asked me what we have here that you don't have at Wisconsin. Perhaps not much, but we will be very disappointed if you do not come by and find out. Please do.

Thanks for the reprints and give my best regards to Esther.

Very sincerely yours,


Paul Doty

PD:bh